

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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BISCHOFF'S BILL CREATING DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE GOES TO GOVERNOR

INDIANAPOLIS – Today the Indiana House voted to send a Senate-amended version of State Rep. Bob Bischoff's (D-Lawrenceburg) House Bill 1008 to Gov. Mitch Daniels. Representatives voted 89-0 on the bill, which would create a state Department of Agriculture and an Office of Rural Affairs.

The Department of Agriculture would provide administration and staff support for various agriculture-related councils that are responsible for ensuring the produce, dairy, and meat products on our grocery stores' shelves are of high quality. The legislation defines the Office of Rural Development as having control of funding that will be distributed for research contributing to the development of the state's farming techniques.

"By not having a state Department of Agriculture, Indiana's farmers have long been denied the opportunity to improve the quality and quantity of produce available to Hoosiers, both for our consumption and for our state's economic development," said Bischoff. "These are surely the most aggressive steps taken in recent years to improve Indiana's agricultural industry and I'm so proud to be involved in this legislation that introduces the new department and the Office of Rural Development."

Under the legislation, the lieutenant governor would be the Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. He or she would be responsible for hiring the directors of the department and of the Office of Rural Development.

The bill will be sent to the governor, who will have the opportunity to sign it, veto it, or ignore it, which would make it law. It is expected that he will sign the legislation.